United Nations A/C.2/62/7

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 October 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Second Committee
Agenda item 54 (e)
Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018)

Note by the Secretariat

At its eighth session, held in Madrid from 3 to 14 September 2007, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, by its decision 3/COP.8, adopted a ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018).

The texts of decision 3/COP.8 and the strategic plan are provided herewith (see annex) as supplementary information to the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/62/276, annex II).

07-55780 (E) 251007

Annex

Decision 3/COP.8, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its eighth session

Ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018)

The Conference of the Parties,

Having reviewed documents ICCD/COP(8)/10 and Add.1 and Add.2,

Emphasizing that implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) requires efforts from all Parties, taking into account the different obligations within the Convention,

Recognizing that Parties have primary responsibilities in delivering the objectives of the Convention and its implementing strategies, according to their national priorities and in a spirit of international solidarity and partnership,

Underlining the importance of the efficient implementation of the Convention as an instrument to prevent, control and reverse desertification/land degradation and also to contribute to the reduction of poverty while promoting sustainable development,

Mindful of changes that have taken place since the entry into force of the Convention, notably with respect to the increasing threats of desertification/land degradation and drought,

Recognizing the need for the Convention and its institutions to have adequate resources to allocate, according to their new results-based management (RBM) approach work programme based on the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) in order to respond to the new challenges and needs at all levels,

Aware of the need, in the context of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), for substantial, adequate and timely financial resources and other forms of support corresponding to the needs of affected developing country Parties, to assist these Parties in their implementation of the Convention,

Mindful that the Convention, its secretariat and other institutions, and supporting bodies, including the Global Mechanism (GM), and the Convention's financial mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), should cooperate and coordinate their activities in this regard,

Commending with appreciation the intersessional intergovernmental working group for fulfilling its mandate and delivering the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018),

1. *Decides* to adopt the strategy contained in the annex to this decision, as the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), hereinafter referred to as "The Strategy";

2. *Also decides* on the further specific guidance on the enactment of the Implementation Framework spelled out below;

3. *Requests* that the various Convention bodies develop their respective RBM multi-year (four-year) programmes of work in line with The Strategy and report on progress in implementation at the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The Conference of the Parties (COP) will take relevant decisions based on recommendations from the CRIC. All draft multi-year programmes of work shall be presented to the COP for adoption;

A. Parties

4. *Requests* Parties to put into operation the implementation of The Strategy, in accordance with their national priorities, in a spirit of international solidarity and partnership;

5. *Urges* affected developing country Parties, and any other affected country Party within the framework of its Regional Implementation Annex, to align their action programmes and other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention with The Strategy by, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives;

6. *Requests* Parties to report on progress made in their implementation of The Strategy, based on the reporting guidelines to be considered at the ninth session of the COP (COP 9);

B. Committee on Science and Technology

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureaux of the COP and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), to prepare for the CST, in line with The Strategy, a costed draft two-year work programme taking an RBM approach, such consultations to be conducted as outlined in draft decision ICCD/COP(8)/L.12;

8. *Further requests* the CST to include on the agenda of its ninth session an item on the consideration of its costed draft two-year work programme, following a RBM approach consistent with The Strategy;

9. *Takes note* that draft decisions ICCD/COP(8)/L.14 and ICCD/COP(8)/L.11, to reshape the operations of the CST and on the theme for discussion at the ninth session of the CST (CST 9), will contribute to implementation of The Strategy, in particular operational objective 3;

10. *Requests* the CST to provide advice to the CRIC discussion on reporting at COP 9 on how best to measure progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy, inter alia, based on the deliberations and outcomes of its ninth session;

11. *Also requests* the CST to present its costed draft two-year work programme to COP 9 for consideration and adoption;

C. Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

12. *Decides* that the CRIC will be responsible for reviewing implementation of The Strategy by the Parties and the Convention bodies;

13. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureaux of the COP and the CRIC, to prepare, in line with The Strategy, a draft multi-year work programme for the CRIC taking an RBM approach;

14. *Decides* that the seventh session of the CRIC (CRIC 7) shall be a special session to consider methodological matters to further advance the implementation of The Strategy, in line with draft decision ICCD/COP(8)/L.19, and in this context *decides also* that CST 9 shall be held in conjunction with this session of the CRIC;

15. *Proposes* that future meetings of the CRIC should be held predominantly in an interactive format, highlighting for each key issue a set of targeted recommendations for the COP to consider and adopt, if appropriate;

16. *Requests* the CRIC to finalize proposals for the performance review and assessment of the implementation of the Convention and especially The Strategy, including recommendations emanating from CST 9, for discussion at COP 9;

D. Global Mechanism

17. *Requests* the GM to revise its current work plan, maintaining the RBM approach, to make it consistent with The Strategy, and to prepare a draft multi-year (four-year) work plan complemented by a costed biennial programme of work;

18. *Further requests* the GM to present its proposed draft multi-year work plan and biennial programme of work to CRIC 7 for review and subsequently to COP 9 for consideration and adoption;

19. *Urges* the GM to promote actions leading to the mobilization of international and national resources needed by affected countries Parties to enhance the implementation of the Convention through The Strategy, maintaining a geographical balance so that countries with less capacity can also benefit from these new and additional international and national resources;

E. Secretariat

20. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare a draft multi-year (four-year) work plan complemented by a costed biennial work programme in line with The Strategy and taking an RBM approach;

21. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to present the proposed multi-year work plan and biennial programme of work to CRIC 7 for review and subsequently to COP 9 for consideration and adoption;

22. *Invites* the Executive Secretary to consider engaging in policy dialogue on The Strategy to foster awareness of and buy-in to The Strategy among relevant policy decision makers, making use, inter alia, of the opportunities provided by the sixteenth and the seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

23. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to CRIC 7 and COP 9 on the implementation of The Strategy;

F. Secretariat/Global Mechanism coordination

24. *Directs* the Executive Secretary and the GM, within their respective mandates, to implement The Strategy in order to ensure consistency and complementarity in the delivery of services, and to strengthen their coordination and cooperation from headquarters to country level;

25. *Requests* the Executive Secretary and the GM to submit a draft joint work programme, in accordance with paragraph 22 of The Strategy, at CRIC 7 and to submit it for consideration by COP 9;

26. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary and the GM to include indicators of successful cooperation in their results-based management-based joint work programme with the objective of strengthening the effectiveness of the synergistic services provided by the secretariat and the GM.

27. *Further requests* an assessment of the GM with recommendations to be undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations, to be submitted to COP 9 for consideration, based on the following terms of reference:

(a) To evaluate the work and functions of the GM, in accordance with its mandate as set out in the Convention and relevant decisions of the COP;

(b) To identify any lack of clarity in the institutional arrangements and accountability set out in the Convention and in the memorandum of understanding between the International Fund on Agricultural Development and the UNCCD, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of the functioning of the Convention bodies;

(c) To assess the alignment between the programme of the GM and that of the secretariat, and the conformity of the programme of the GM to the guidance of the COP;

(d) To evaluate the communication and working modalities between the GM and the secretariat;

28. *Encourages*, in this context, the secretariat and the GM to evolve their joint work programme as set out in paragraph 22 of The Strategy, for consideration by the JIU in its evaluation;

29. *Recognizes* that regional coordination is an important component in implementing the Convention and The Strategy, and *further recognizes* that coordination mechanisms must be responsive to existing and emerging needs, capacities and the specific issues of regions;

30. *Calls upon* each region to develop a proposal, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary and the GM, on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention, taking into account, inter alia, existing regional coordination activities, tools, and donor and regional funding arrangements, and providing details of staffing, hosting possibilities and other financial resources required, and to define their functions and outputs and reporting arrangements in terms of implementing the Convention and delivering The Strategy, and to provide these prior to COP 9 for consideration in the context of the budget and the programme of work;

31. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to compile regional proposals and the means for putting them into operation, and to submit these to COP 9 for consideration;

32. In the above context, *also requests* the Executive Secretary, taking into account the views of the GM on its regional arrangements:

(a) To review the current regional coordination arrangements within the secretariat and within the GM with a view to improving them;

(b) To develop evidence-based options for improving regional coordination arrangements based on the above-mentioned review and the proposals received from regions according to paragraph 30;

(c) To submit these to COP 9 for consideration;

33. *Decides*, while the review process in paragraphs 30, 31 and 32 is taking place and without pre-judging its outcome, to continue through the Supplementary Fund to support, and where possible

strengthen, the existing Regional Coordination Units, and *encourages* donors and, in accordance with national capacities and where appropriate, the Parties in the regions concerned to provide funds to this end;

G. Global Environment Facility

34. *Recognizes* that the implementation of The Strategy requires the mobilization of adequate, predictable and timely financial resources at both national and international levels for its effective implementation and, in this context, *invites* the GEF to consider simplifying its funding procedures in order to ease the access by developing countries to GEF funding, and to report back to the COP on progress in this regard;

35. *Invites* the GEF to take The Strategy into account when planning and programming for the next replenishment period, in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the Convention;

H. Civil society

36. *Requests* Parties to promote awareness of, and include, local populations, particularly women and youth and civil society organizations, in the implementation of The Strategy, consistent with operational objective 1;

37. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to take into account input from civil society organizations when formulating of the selection criteria for financial support for their participation at UNCCD meetings and processes, consistent with the established rules of procedure of the COP;

I. Planning and budgeting cycles

38. *Decides* that planning and budgeting cycles should be undertaken as set out below and *further decides* that under the first planning cycle the drafts will be presented at CRIC 7 and considered along with the drafts under the first budget cycle at COP 9:

(a) Planning cycle:

(i) The CST, the CRIC, the secretariat and the GM each formulate multi-year (four-year) work plans according to RBM principles;

(ii) Multi-year work plans are submitted to the secretariat for integration into the comprehensive multi-year work plan for the Convention;

(iii) Multi-year work plans are regularly updated for each COP to cover the two subsequent intersessional periods;

(iv) In addition, biennial cost estimations relating to the work programme are developed;

(b) Budget cycle:

(i) The budget cycle is two years;

(ii) The budget is prepared by the secretariat, integrating cost-estimated biennial programmes of work for the CST, the CRIC, the secretariat and the GM;

J. Performance monitoring and indicator development

39. *Invites* Parties and the Regional Implementation Annexes to develop nationally and regionally relevant indicators for the implementation of The Strategy for consideration at CRIC 7 in the context of the development of reporting guidelines for the Parties;

40. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to consolidate these indicators with a view to harmonizing them as appropriate;

41. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to ensure the integration of recommendations from CST 9 based on discussions at the eighth session of the CRIC (CRIC 8) relevant to establishing reporting guidelines in line with The Strategy;

42. *Decides* that Parties at the tenth session of the COP (COP 10) should develop the appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for an independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy, and that the evaluation shall be completed for consideration at the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11);

43. *Affirms* that the COP will be the main body for assessing and reviewing the overall implementation of The Strategy, assisted in this regard by the CRIC and the CST and involving the COP Bureau as appropriate, in line with their respective mandates;

K. Costing of strategic plan/next steps

44. In accordance with their different obligations under the Convention, *encourages* developed country Parties to consider prioritizing the need for supporting the implementation of The Strategy in their respective policies and programmes for cooperation, and *further encourages* affected developing countries to consider making this a priority in their cooperation assistance arrangements;

45. *Recognizes* the need for Parties to realign their national action programmes with The Strategy, and *invites* Parties with the assistance of the GM to mobilize international and national resources, both technical and financial, to assist countries with this realignment;

46. *Invites* developed country Parties and other Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and relevant organizations to make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of The Strategy.

Appendix

Strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

I. Introduction

1. Developed as a result of the Rio Summit, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is a unique instrument that has brought attention to land degradation in the drylands where exist some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and people in the world. Ten years after its coming into force, the UNCCD benefits from universal membership and is increasingly recognized as an instrument which can make a lasting contribution to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty reduction globally.

2. After a decade of implementation, it is recognized that limiting factors have prevented optimal deployment of the Convention. Chief among these factors are insufficient financing compared to its two Rio sister conventions, a weak scientific basis, insufficient advocacy and awareness among various constituencies, institutional weaknesses and difficulties in reaching consensus among Parties.

3. Also, the UNCCD operates today in an environment that has evolved considerably since when it was first negotiated and it faces different opportunities and constraints which will condition its implementation in the forthcoming decade.

4. For one thing, the policy environment has changed considerably since Rio with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), increased support to Africa and the least-developed countries, stronger commitment for climate change mitigation and adaptation, prospects of global agricultural trade liberalization, and growing numbers of environmental refugees and migrants shedding new light on the impacts of poverty and environmental degradation.

5. The scientific environment has also evolved with the work of the Millennium Assessment (MA) on dryland ecosystems, which has contributed to improved understanding of the biophysical and socio-economic trends relating to land degradation in global drylands, and their impacts on human and ecosystem well-being. The MA has also contributed to mapping out key gaps in data and knowledge on dryland ecosystems and people.

6. The financing environment has also changed profoundly in the last decade, with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) becoming a financial mechanism of the Convention, official development assistance (ODA) flows increasing again after a decade of stagnation, and declining resources for rural development and agriculture. Donors have refocused their financing strategies to support country-driven priorities, based on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and other country-led development planning instruments. Lastly, various innovative financing instruments have come to life, including payments for ecological services and carbon finance.

7. This new environment provides the starting point for this strategic plan along with an assessment of the successes and limiting factors of the Convention as it enters its second decade. This strategic plan provides a unique opportunity to address some of the Convention's key challenges, to capitalize

on its strengths, to seize opportunities provided by the new policy and financing environment, and to create a new, revitalized common ground for all UNCCD stakeholders.

II. The vision

8. The aim for the future is to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

III. Strategic objectives and expected impacts

9. The following "strategic objectives" will guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the period 2008–2018, including raising political will. Meeting these long-term[1] objectives will contribute to achieving the above-mentioned vision. The "expected impacts" are the long-term effects intended by the strategic objectives.

Strategic objective 1: To improve the living conditions of affected populations

Expected impact 1.1. People living in areas affected by desertification/land degradation and drought to have an improved and more diversified livelihood base and to benefit from income generated from sustainable land management.

Expected impact 1.2. Affected populations' socio-economic and environmental vulnerability to climate change, climate variability and drought is reduced.

Indicator S-1[2]: Decrease in numbers of people negatively impacted by the processes of desertification/land degradation and drought.

Indicator S-2: Increase in the proportion of households living above the poverty line in affected areas.

Indicator S-3: Reduction in the proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption in affected areas.

Strategic objective 2: To improve the condition of affected ecosystems

Expected impact 2.1. Land productivity and other ecosystem goods and services in affected areas are enhanced in a sustainable manner contributing to improved livelihoods.

Expected impact 2.2. The vulnerability of affected ecosystems to climate change, climate variability and drought is reduced.

Indicator S-4: Reduction in the total area affected by desertification/land degradation and drought.

Indicator S-5: Increase in net primary productivity in affected areas.

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1 For the purposes of this strategic plan, "long term" means ten years or more.

2 The indicators contained in the strategic plan are indicative of the types of indicators to be established to provide information on the trends in affected areas. These global indicators are to be refined further by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) capitalizing on existing sources of data, to form the baseline data trends under outcome 3.2. See below: Chapter VII. Performance monitoring, paragraph 1.

Strategic objective 3: To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD

Expected impact 3.1. Sustainable land management and combating desertification/land degradation contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change.

Indicator S-6: Increase in carbon stocks (soil and plant biomass) in affected areas.

Indicator S-7: Areas of forest, agricultural and aquaculture ecosystems under sustainable management.

Strategic objective 4: To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors

Expected impact 4.1. Increased financial, technical and technological resources are made available to affected developing country Parties, and where appropriate Central and Eastern European countries, to implement the Convention.

Expected impact 4.2. Enabling policy environments are improved for UNCCD implementation at all levels.

Indicator S-8[3]**:** Increase in the level and diversity of available funding for combating desertification/land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

Indicator S-9: Development policies and measures address desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.

IV. The mission

10. To provide a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies, programmes and measures to prevent, control and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence, raising public awareness, standard setting, advocacy and resource mobilization, thereby contributing to poverty reduction.

V. Operational objectives and expected outcomes

11. The following "operational objectives" will guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the short and medium term[4] with a view to supporting the attainment of the above-mentioned vision and strategic objectives. The "outcomes" are the short and medium-term effects intended by the operational objectives.

Operational objective 1: Advocacy, awareness raising and education

To actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues.

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[3] Indicators pertaining to Parties' implementation are to be further developed and refined. (See below: Section VII. Performance monitoring, paragraph 1).

[4] For the purposes of this strategic plan, "short and medium-term" means for a period of three to five years.

Outcome 1.1: Desertification/land degradation and drought issues and the synergies with climate change adaptation/mitigation and biodiversity conservation are effectively communicated among key constituencies at the international, national and local levels.

Outcome 1.2: Desertification/land degradation and drought issues are addressed in relevant international forums, including those pertaining to agricultural trade, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, rural development, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Outcome 1.3: Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the scientific community in the North and the South are increasingly engaged as stakeholders in the Convention processes and desertification/land degradation and drought are addressed in their advocacy, awareness-raising and education initiatives.

Operational objective 2: Policy framework

To support the creation of enabling environments for promoting solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

Outcome 2.1: Policy, institutional, financial and socio-economic drivers of desertification/land degradation and barriers to sustainable land management are assessed, and appropriate measures to remove these barriers are recommended.

Outcome 2.2: Affected country Parties revise their national action programmes (NAPs) into strategic documents supported by biophysical and socio-economic baseline information and include them in integrated investment frameworks.

Outcome 2.3: Affected country Parties integrate their NAPs and sustainable land management and land degradation issues into development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans and policies.

Outcome 2.4: Developed country Parties mainstream UNCCD objectives and sustainable land management interventions into their development cooperation programmes/projects in line with their support to national sectoral and investment plans.

Outcome 2.5: Mutually reinforcing measures among desertification/land degradation action programmes and biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation are introduced or strengthened so as to enhance the impact of interventions.

Operational objective 3: Science, technology and knowledge

To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.

Outcome 3.1: National monitoring and vulnerability assessment on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported.

Outcome 3.2: A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.

Outcome 3.3: Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.

Outcome 3.4: Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.

Outcome 3.5: Effective knowledge-sharing systems, including traditional knowledge,[5] are in place at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to support policymakers and end users, including through the identification and sharing of best practices and success stories.

Outcome 3.6: Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.

Operational objective 4: Capacity-building

To identify and address capacity-building needs to prevent and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

Outcome 4.1: Countries which have carried out the national capacity self assessment (NCSA) implement the resulting action plans to develop the necessary capacity at the individual, institutional and systemic levels[6] to tackle desertification/land degradation and drought issues at the national and local levels.

Outcome 4.2: Those countries which have not previously undertaken capacity needs assessments engage in relevant assessments processes to identify capacity needs for tackling desertification/land degradation and drought at the national and local levels.

Operational objective 5: Financing and technology transfer

To mobilize and improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral and multilateral financial and technological resources in order to increase their impact and effectiveness.

Outcome 5.1: Affected country Parties develop integrated investment frameworks for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increasing the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

Outcome 5.2: Developed country Parties provide substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to support domestic initiatives to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

Outcome 5.3: Parties increase their efforts to mobilize financial resources from international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF, by promoting the UNCCD/Sustainable land management (SLM) agenda within the governing bodies of these institutions.

Outcome 5.4: Innovative sources of finance and financing mechanisms are identified to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, including from the private sector, market-based mechanisms, trade, foundations and CSOs, and other financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and for hunger and poverty reduction.

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[5] Excluding traditional knowledge on genetic resources.

[6] See the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) "Resource Kit for National Capacity Self-Assessment", 2005, page vi, for a description of the various levels at which capacity can be developed.

Outcome 5.5: Access to technology by affected country Parties is facilitated through adequate financing, effective economic and policy incentives and technical support, notably within the framework of South-South and North-South cooperation.

VI. Implementation framework

12. This section defines the roles and responsibilities of the various UNCCD institutions, partners and stakeholders in meeting the above-mentioned objectives.

A. The Committee on Science and Technology

13. Operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge is a central component of the strategic plan. The CST is given primary responsibility to fulfil this objective as well as a support role for implementing operational objective 1. In order to fulfil this mandate, the CST shall be strengthened to assess, advise and support implementation, on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis, of the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the causes and impacts of desertification/land degradation, and shall inform COP decisions.

14. The CST shall be reshaped in the following manner:

(a) Institutional arrangements

(i) Representation in the CST and the roster of experts is to be based on professional expertise and is to include a wide range of disciplines and experience regarding biophysical and socio-economic aspects. It shall respect equitable representation according to the United Nations rules. Parties shall establish a specific procedure to this effect as per the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations.

(ii) The COP decides the appropriate frequency of CST meetings, including the possibility of synchronized CST and Committee for the Review of the Implementation (CRIC) meetings, with a view to ensuring continuity and providing timely policy advice to the COP in accordance with this strategic plan.

(iii) The COP appoints the chairperson of the CST for a two-year term. It also appoints the members of the bureau of the CST for two-year terms. With a view to staggering the replacement of the members of the bureau in order to ensure continuity in the work of the CST, half of the members are, exceptionally, to be appointed at COP 8 for one-year terms and their replacements are also to be appointed at COP 8, for two-year terms.

(b) Programme of work

(i) The COP adopts a focused work programme for the CST and establishes clear priorities based on the strategic plan.

(ii) The COP may invite, as appropriate, renowned scientific institutions and subject-matter expert task forces to consider issues.

(iii) Modes of delivery:

a. The CST develops a two-year work programme, following a results-bases management (RBM) approach consistent with the objectives and results of this strategic plan.

b. CST meetings produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer-reviewed and published literature that inform policy formulation and dialogue at the COP.

c. The CST mobilizes science and technology experts, networks and institutions with excellence in desertification/land degradation issues under its auspices to bolster the scientific and technical basis of the UNCCD.

d. The CST enhances its convening power by adding high-level expertise and systematically peer-reviewing its outputs.

e. The CST agenda is to focus on one or two priorities reviewed every biennium, as appropriate.

f. The CST, in cooperation with relevant institutions, creates and steers knowledge-management systems aiming to improve the brokering of scientific and technical information from and to institutions, Parties and end users.

g. The CST strengthens its linkages with thematic programme networks (TPNs) and other relevant regional implementation activities whose mandates are improved to provide regional input to the work of the CST.

(iv) Priorities:

a. The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, tools and methods, biophysical and socio-economic baselines on desertification/land degradation at the national level.

b. The CST develops, in cooperation with relevant institutions, methodologies and guidelines for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation trends.

c. Budget: Adequate and predictable resources are required to ensure the effective implementation of the above recommendations.

B. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

15. The CRIC plays a central role in reviewing the implementation of the strategic plan through an effective reporting process and documenting and disseminating best practices from experience in implementing the Convention, thereby bringing a cross-cutting contribution to all operational objectives. Overall, the CRIC shall be strengthened to improve feedback loops to measure progress and support continuous improvement in implementing the strategic plan.

16. The CRIC shall be reshaped in the following manner:

(a) Institutional arrangements: The COP is invited to pursue its review of the CRIC and its institutional arrangements in the light of the provisions of this strategic plan.

(b) Functions:

(i) Determining and disseminating best practices on implementation of the UNCCD.

(ii) Reviewing implementation of this strategic plan.

(iii) Reviewing Parties' contributions to the implementation of the Convention.

(iv) Assessing and monitoring of CRIC performance and effectiveness.

(c) Programme of work:

(i) Modes of delivery:

a. Multi-year planning: The CRIC adopts a multi-year work programme, following an RBM approach consistent with the objectives and results of this strategic plan.

b. In the context of its ongoing review of the CRIC, the COP should explore the possibility of synchronizing CRIC and CST sessions as appropriate and decide on their required frequency in the light of this strategic plan.

(ii) Priorities:

a. The CRIC is restructured around a simplified and effective reporting process based on information which is comparable across regions and over time. New reporting guidelines are adopted taking into account the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Reporting. Reporting should be inclusive of NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs).

b. The CRIC systematically documents and disseminates best practices.

c. The CRIC is assigned responsibility for assessing on a regular basis progress made in implementing this strategic plan, based on a set of indicators.

(d) Budget: Adequate and predictable resources are required to ensure the effective implementation of the above recommendations.

C. The Global Mechanism

17. Operational objective 5 on financing and technology transfer is a central component of the strategic plan. The GM has a central responsibility in contributing to this objective, given its mandate to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms and to mobilize and channel substantial financial resources. The GM also has a support role for operational objectives 1 and 2. In order to fulfil its role, the GM shall strengthen its capacity to mobilize existing as well as fresh sources of finance and to facilitate access to technology.

18. The GM shall be realigned in the following manner:

(a) Institutional arrangements:

(i) GM institutional arrangements with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to remain unchanged.

(ii) The COP to monitor the effectiveness and added-value of the GM's institutional arrangements with IFAD in line with JIU recommendations.

(b) Programme of work:

(i) The GM adopts a four-year strategic plan complemented by a biennial programme of work following an RBM approach consistent with the objectives and results of this strategic plan.

(ii) The GM revises its consolidated strategy and enhanced approach (CSEA) in order to prioritize its role in mobilizing financial resources for programmatic investments in affected developing country Parties and, where appropriate, in affected country Parties of the Central and Eastern European region:

a. The GM engages with donors, the private sector, financial institutions and other relevant institutions to promote actions leading to the mobilization of substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources.

b. The GM advises and assists affected developing country Parties and, where appropriate, affected country Parties of the Central and Eastern European region regarding the development of integrated investment frameworks for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increasing the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

c. The GM explores new sources of finance and financing mechanisms to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, including the private sector, market-based mechanisms, trade organizations, foundations, CSOs, and other financing mechanisms, for climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and the fight against hunger and poverty.

d. The GM supports the development of (sub)regional financing platforms to improve effectiveness, harmonization and alignment among donor institutions.

(iii) The GM develops a strategy to operationalize its complementary role to the GEF.

(iv) Facilitation Committee (FC):

a. The FC is invited to revise its mandate and adopt a joint work programme aligned with the strategic plan.

b. Individual members of the FC are invited to develop consistent and complementary financing platforms to align their activities with the UNCCD strategic plan.

c. The FC reports in a coordinated fashion to the COP and the CRIC on issues relevant to its programme of work.

(c) Budget: Adequate and predictable resources are essential to ensure the consistent and predictable deployment of GM functions under the strategic plan.

D. The secretariat

19. Successful implementation of this strategic plan requires a strengthening of the core servicing, advocacy and agenda-setting and representation functions of the UNCCD secretariat – with commensurate capacity and resources – in order to support Parties, the COP and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention in fulfilling their respective roles. The secretariat has a lead role for operational objective 1 and specific outcomes of operational objectives 2 and 3 as well as a support role in other operational objectives.

20. The secretariat shall be reshaped in the following manner:

(a) Institutional arrangements: The secretariat implements and systematically reports to the COP on relevant institutional recommendations contained in the JIU report.

(b) Programme of work:

(i) The secretariat adopts a four-year strategic plan complemented by a biennial programme of work following an RBM approach consistent with the objectives and results of this strategic plan.

(ii) Servicing and facilitating functions:

a. The secretariat performs enhanced servicing functions to support COP and CRIC sessions by:

i. Providing compilation and synthesis of national reports on the basis of new guidelines.

ii. Producing case studies, best policy practices.

iii. Supporting the preparation of national reports.

b. The secretariat develops its capacity to service the CST effectively by:

i. Supporting the knowledge management systems established by the CST and performing information and knowledge brokering functions.

ii. Supporting the convening and mobilization by the CST of relevant science, knowledge and technical capacities.

c. The secretariat supports efforts of affected country Parties to strengthen dialogue and consultation at subregional and/or regional and interregional level.

d. The secretariat services the regional implementation annexes on request through facilitating cooperation at regional/subregional levels.

e. The secretariat facilitates a process to determine optimal mechanisms for regional coordination, recognizing the positive experience in, and according to the needs defined by, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe, to support the implementation of this strategy, the process to be concluded at COP 9.

(iii) Other core functions:

a. The secretariat develops increased advocacy and awareness-raising, agenda-setting and representation activities, as appropriate, in relevant forums at the international level.

b. The secretariat coordinates the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy at the international level with a set of core communications objectives and expected results.

c. The secretariat works with the Joint Liaison Group to strengthen cooperation in the implementation process of the Rio conventions in order to move towards more concrete modalities of substantive cooperation in line with JIU recommendations.

d. CSO participation:

i. The secretariat develops revised procedures for the participation of CSOs in UNCCD meetings and processes, including clear selection criteria and a mechanism to ensure a balance of participants from different regions in line with JIU recommendations.

ii. The secretariat develops stronger mechanisms to support a CSO network.

iii. The secretariat advocates for more support and channels grants to facilitate CSO participation in UNCCD meetings and processes.

(c) Budget: Adequate and predictable resources are essential to ensure the good functioning and efficient operation of the secretariat in performing its core functions and delivering services required for implementing this strategic plan through an RBM framework as mentioned in the JIU report.

E. Secretariat/Global Mechanism coordination

21. In order to make a clear distinction between the functions, responsibilities and activities of the secretariat and those of the GM as per JIU recommendation, and to ensure the consistent and complementary delivery of services along the lines of the strategic plan, the secretariat and the GM shall strengthen their coordination and cooperation from headquarters to country level.

22. This entails the following:

(a) Programme of work: The secretariat and the GM submit to the COP a joint biennial work plan setting out a common approach to supporting the Parties and delineating a clear division of labour.

(i) Accountability: The secretariat and the GM report in a clear and transparent way on the effective share of labour and the use of the core and voluntary funds relating to the joint work plan. The two organizations report jointly to the COP on the implementation of the joint work plan. The bureau is mandated by the COP to oversee implementation of the joint work plan.

(ii) Efficiency: The secretariat and the GM will each engage in an exercise on how to increase the efficiency of human and will financial resources and seek

professional advice on how to organize more effectively for delivery of the joint work plan.

(b) Regional dialogue and coordination:

The COP is invited to consider the establishment of appropriate regional dialogue and coordination facilitation mechanisms. This entails that each region should, for consideration by the COP:

(i) Identify the immediate added value of such a regional body in the context of the new secretariat and GM work plans.

(ii) Identify what would be the appropriate institutional arrangements for such a body in their region.

(iii) Develop the short/medium-term RBM framework for these bodies.

F. Additional Joint Inspection Unit recommendations to Parties and the Conference of the Parties

23. Parties have a lead role in delivering all the objectives and outcomes of this strategic plan and the substantive JIU recommendations which were integrated into them. In addition, Parties shall implement these process-related recommendations from the JIU report:

(a) The COP is invited to ensure that sufficient technical and financial support is provided to the affected developing countries for the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention, in accordance with Article 26, paragraph 7.

(b) The COP may wish to consider how the Bureau deals with operational and financial contingencies when the COP is not in session.

G. The Global Environment Facility

24. The COP may invite the GEF to take into account this strategic plan and to align its operations accordingly in order to facilitate effective implementation of the Convention.

VII. Performance monitoring

25. Indicators:

(a) The strategic objectives indicators contained in this strategic plan are indicative of the type of indicators to be established to provide information on the trends in affected areas. Many of these indicators have been selected from the GEF land degradation focal area strategic objectives, MDGs and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2010 Target. These global indicators are to be refined further by the CST, capitalizing on existing sources of data, to form the baseline data trends under outcome 3.2.

(b) Operational objectives indicators pertaining to Parties' implementation are to be developed within the follow-up to the IIWG and reviewed by the CRIC.

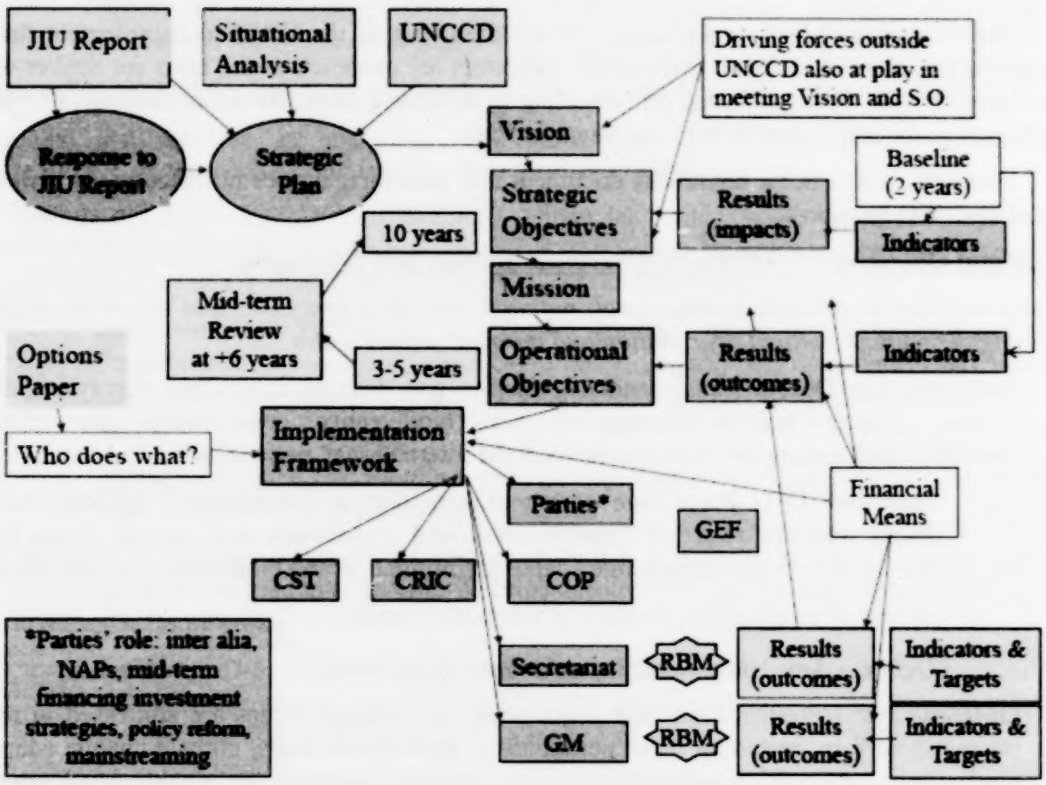
(c) Indicators pertaining to UNCCD institutions are to be developed as part of the RBM frameworks to be developed by these institutions and adopted by the COP. The CRIC will review the institutions' progress in the light of these indicators.

26. A mid-term evaluation is to be undertaken by the COP based on the performance monitoring system six years after the adoption of the strategic plan. This evaluation will review progress made in implementing the strategic plan and will recommend appropriate measures to improve performance and further its implementation.

27. Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies are to report on implementation of the strategic plan at CRIC and COP sessions, based on their results-based framework.

Annex I

Diagram of strategic plan (context and structure)



Glossary

Objective (strategic or operational): The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental or other results to which the strategy is expected to contribute.

Impact: The expected long-term effect (ten years or more) resulting from the Outcomes of activities aligned with operational Objectives.

Outcome: The likely short- and medium-term effects (three to five years) of activities, which aggregate to generate the Impacts.

Annex II

Proposed indicators for the strategic plan's operational objectives

Introduction

The following indicators are submitted by the Chair of the IIWG to complement the work accomplished by the IIWG. These preliminary indicators are proposed as the basis for further work to be conducted by the Working Group on Reporting to develop a complete set of indicators to monitor performance in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

However, this is not a consensus document and therefore, it does not necessarily reflect the views of all IIWG members.

Operational Objective 1 – Advocacy, Awareness Raising and Education

To actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought related issues.

Outcome 1.1: Desertification/land degradation and drought issues and the synergies with climate change adaptation/mitigation and biodiversity conservation are effectively communicated among key constituencies at the international, national and local levels.

Indicator O-1: Percentage of key stakeholders at international, national and local levels who are aware of desertification/land degradation and drought issues and the synergies with climate change adaptation/mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

Means of verification: Analysis of interview results[1]

Define: "Key" stakeholders; parameters of awareness

Outcome 1.2: Desertification/land degradation and drought issues are addressed in relevant international fora, including those pertaining to agricultural trade, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, rural development, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Indicator O-2: Percentage of relevant official international documents and decisions that contain substantial statements, conclusions and recommendations on desertification/land degradation and drought issues.

Means of verification: Analysis of relevant reports and documents

Define: Relevant official documents and decisions, proceedings, programmes and budgets, e.g. WTO outputs, decisions and protocols of other MEA, GDPRD products, etc.

Outcome 1.3: CSOs and the scientific community in the North and the South are increasingly engaged as stakeholders in the Convention processes and desertification/land degradation and drought are addressed in their advocacy, awareness raising and education initiatives.

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[1] **Note: Information on 'effectiveness of communication' (see outcome 1.1), i.e. awareness of issues, could be obtained through brief interviews with a small (randomly) selected number of stakeholders. This exercise could be combined with an assessment of 'improved knowledge' (see outcomes 3.3 & 3.4 and indicator 11).**

Indicator O-3: Number, type, and area of desertification/land degradation and drought related work (advocacy, awareness raising, education) of CSOs and science and technology institutions.

Means of verification: Lists of accredited institutions, annual reports by the institutions, independent analysis

Operational Objective 2 – Policy Framework

To support the creation of enabling environments for promoting solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

Outcome 2.1: Policy, institutional, financial and socio-economic drivers of desertification/land degradation and barriers to sustainable land management are assessed and appropriate measures to remove these barriers are recommended.

Indicator O-4: Percentage of affected country Parties that have assessed policy, financial and socio-economic drivers of desertification/land degradation and barriers to sustainable land management, and recommended appropriate measures to remove these barriers.

Means of verification: National reports and independent peer review/case studies on related activities of affected country Parties

Outcome 2.2: Affected country Parties revise their NAPs into strategic documents supported by bio-physical and socio-economic baseline information and include them into integrated investment frameworks.

Indicator O-5: Number of affected country Parties that have revised their NAPs into strategic documents and integrated them into development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans and policies.

Means of verification: Strategic documents, sectoral and investment plans, policy papers, report of the GM, report of the Secretariat, affected countries' reports

Remark: This has to be reflected in the guidelines for reporting

Outcome 2.3: Affected country Parties integrate their NAPs and sustainable land management and land degradation issues into development planning and relevant sectoral and investment plans and policies.

Indicator O-6: Number of developed country Parties and their bilateral development agencies which apply the CCD marker (as part of the OECD Rio markers) to screen their aid activities against the objectives of the Convention.

Means of verification: Developed country Parties' reports to OECD

Outcome 2.4: Developed country Parties mainstream UNCCD objectives and sustainable land management interventions into their development cooperation programmes/projects in line with their support to national sectoral and investment plans.

Indicator O-7: Number of developed country Parties development initiatives that have integrated UNCCD objectives

Means of verification: Portfolio analysis results, developed country Parties' reports, GM reports, FIELD engine

Remark: This has to be reflected in improved reporting guidelines for developed country Parties' and GM reports

Outcome 2.5: Mutually reinforcing measures among desertification/land degradation action programmes and biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation are introduced or strengthened so as to enhance the impact of interventions.

Indicator O-8: Number of initiatives for joint implementation efforts of UNCCD, UNFCC and UNCBD/Number of adaptation programs in drylands operational at local and national level which integrate desertification and adaptation

Means of verification: Reports and analysis under relevant MEAs , report of the Secretariat, case studies

Operational Objective 3 – Science, technology and knowledge

To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and the mitigation of the effects of drought.

Outcome 3.1: National monitoring and vulnerability assessment on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected countries are supported.

Indicator O-9: Number of reports from affected Parties submitted to the COP/CRIC (and available to policy makers and other end users) that contain information on biophysical and socio-economic trends in affected areas

Means of verification: National reports and independent assessment

Alternative

Increase in number of affected countries relaying their national reporting on relevant indicators and effective monitoring system for land degradation and desertification

Outcome 3.2: A baseline based on the most robust data available on biophysical and socio-economic trends is developed and relevant scientific approaches are gradually harmonized.

Indicator O-10: Number of internationally recognized reports on biophysical and socio-economic trends that

Means of verification: (Baseline) studies published by the CST and peer reviewed, citations of the studies within the UN context

Define: User community; key data to be collected and reported in baseline and subsequent assessments

Alternative:

Increase in number of country Parties reporting on relevant reliable indicators and its associated baseline values

Outcome 3.3: Knowledge on biophysical and socio-economic factors and on their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making.

Indicator O-11: Percentage of decision-makers at global, regional, sub/regional and national levels who can explain interactions between biophysical and socio-economic factors.

Means of verification: Interview results

Define: Decision-makers

Alternative Indicators

Knowledge management system of the CST in place and used; TPNs satisfy user needs; MoV: Independent review after 5 years

Number of scientific reports, published papers, experts, scientists, networks and bodies dealing with interaction between biophysical and socio-economic factors in affected areas

Procedures on decision-making as well as institutional and legislative frameworks are available

Outcome 3.4: Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved to develop tools to assist decision-making.

Indicator O-12: Percentage of decision-makers at global, regional, sub/regional and national levels who can explain interactions between climate change adaptation, drought mitigation, and restoration of degraded land in affected areas

Means of verification: Interview results (Define "decisions makers)

Alternatives

Number of scientific reports, published papers dealing with cause-effect relation between biophysical and socio-economic factors in affected areas

Good practice guidelines for prevention and rehabilitation of degraded lands and related economical activities are available

Outcome 3.5: Effective knowledge sharing systems, including traditional knowledge,[2] are in place at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels to support policymakers and end users, including through the identification and sharing of best practices and success stories.

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[2] Excluding traditional knowledge on genetic resources.

Indicator O-13: Percentage of decision-makers at global, regional, sub/regional and national levels who can tell best practices and success stories of combating desertification/land degradation

Means of verification: Interview results

Outcome 3.6: Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to desertification/land degradation and drought are engaged to support UNCCD implementation.

Indicator O-14: Number, type and expertise of science and technology institutions organizations and networks dealing with specific knowledge domain that support UNCCD.

Means of verification: List of support institutions

Define: Means/forms of support, e.g. participation in research exercises mandated by COP decisions

Alternative indicator 14

Identified and well known organization that function as platforms for regional transfer of knowledge and technology

Operational Objective 4 - Capacity building

To identify and address capacity building needs to prevent and to revert desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.

Outcome 4.1: Countries that have carried out the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) implement the resulting action plans to develop the necessary capacity, at the individual, institutional and systemic levels[3] to tackle desertification/land degradation and drought issues at the national and local levels.

Indicator O-15: Number of countries that implement NCSA action plans

Means of verification: Action plans, implementation reports

Outcome 4.2: Those countries that have not previously undertaken capacity needs assessments engage in relevant assessments processes to identify capacity needs for tackling desertification/land degradation and drought at the national and local levels.

Indicator O-16: Number of countries (without NCSA process) that implement action plans to develop the identified necessary capacity to tackle desertification/land degradation issues at the national and local levels.

MoV: Action plans, implementation reports

Remark: Indicator 15 and 16 might be merged

[3] As described in the UNDP resource kit for National Capacity Self-Assessment, 2005, page vi.

Operational Objective 5 - Financing and technology transfer

To mobilize and improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral and multilateral financial and technological resources to increase their impact and effectiveness

Outcome 5.1: Affected country Parties develop integrated investment frameworks for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increase the effectiveness and impact of interventions.

Indicator O-17: Number of affected country Parties whose development plans/investment frameworks reflect leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources for combating desertification and land degradation.

Means of verification: UNCCD reports (based on country reports and GM reports)

Remark: This has to be reflected in improved reporting guidelines for developed country Parties' and GM reports; the required data, however, will be difficult to collect

Outcome 5.2: Developed country Parties provide substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought to support domestic initiatives.

Indicator O-18: Volume of financial resources for measures to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, provided by developed country parties according to agreed commitments, investment plans and payment schedules.

Means of verification: UNCCD reports (based on country reports and GM reports)

Remark: This has to be reflected in improved reporting guidelines for developed country Parties' and GM reports; the required data, however, will be difficult to collect

Outcome 5.3: Parties increase their efforts to mobilize financial resources from international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF by promoting the UNCCD/SLM agenda within the governing bodies of these institutions.

Indicator O-19: Number and type of funding sources from international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF, for combating desertification/land degradation.

Means of verification: UNCCD reports

Remark: This has to be reflected in the reporting guidelines

Outcome 5.4: Innovative sources of finance and financing mechanisms are identified to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, including from the private sector, market-based mechanisms, trade, foundations and civil society organisations (CSO), and other financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and for hunger and poverty reduction.

Indicator O-20: Reported cases on innovative models (private sector, market/based mechanisms, trade, foundations and CSOs, etc.) for financing of land degradation or desertification.

Means of verification: GM report, National Reports

Outcome 5.5: Access to technology by affected country Parties is facilitated through adequate financing, effective economic and policy incentives and technical support, notably in the framework of South-South and North-South cooperation.

Indicator O-21: Number and type of technical support measures received from South-South and North-South cooperation.

Means of verification: UNCCD report

United Nations A/C.2/62/8

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 October 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Second Committee
Agenda item 54 (i)
Sustainable development: promotion of new and renewable sources of energy

Letter dated 15 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the "Damascus declaration" on the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency for the future cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (see annex). The Damascus declaration was adopted at the end of the fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, which was held in Damascus from 21 to 24 June 2007 under the main theme "The way forward for renewable energy development and technology transfer: Cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa". The conference was organized by the Ministry of Electricity of the Syrian Arab Republic, represented by the National Energy Research Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), supported by the New and Renewable Energy Authority of Egypt, the National Energy Research Centre of Jordan and the Euro-Arab Cooperation Centre. It was attended by ministers, heads of delegations and representatives from 38 countries, including representatives of 19 national, international and regional organizations, and 15 ministers.

I should appreciate it if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 54 (i), "Sustainable development: promotion of new and renewable sources of energy", which was allocated to the Second Committee.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-55236 (E) 241007

Annex to the letter dated 15 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Damascus declaration on the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency for future cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa

Conclusions and recommendations from the fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference

We, the Ministers, heads of delegations and representatives from 38 countries, including 19 national and international organizations, 15 ministers, 7 from countries in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, convening at the fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, held at Damascus and Palmyra from 21 to 24 June 2007, under the main theme, "The way forward for renewable energy development and technology transfer: Cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa":

Recalling the Abu Dhabi Declaration on Environment and Energy 2003, the outcomes of the first Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, held in Sana'a in 2004, the second Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, held in Amman in 2005, the third Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, held in Cairo in 2006; the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, the International Conference for Renewable Energies, held in Bonn in 2004, the Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference, held in Beijing in 2005 and the ninth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), held in Dubai in 2006, as well as the Declaration of Berlin 2007 on the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency and the fifteenth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development in 2007,

Aware of the rapidly growing demand for energy to satisfy the sustainable development needs in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, and of the rising energy prices,

Acknowledging the recent technological advancement in several renewable energy technologies, the abundant renewable resources in the Middle East and North Africa region and the consequent opportunities for widespread applications,

Concerned about global warming and climate change and related adverse impacts,

Recognizing that renewable energy development and energy efficiency measures can strongly contribute to climate protection, energy security, job creation and sustainable economic development,

Realizing the need in the Middle East and North Africa region for technology transfer and the opportunities for cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, with benefits for both, utilizing instruments such as the European Neighbourhood Policy,

Noting that the countries of the Middle East and North Africa region have stressed their commitment to take necessary measures and develop competent plans

to enhance renewable energies in their countries' energy portfolios, as appropriate to each country's resources and needs, and through the establishment of regional markets,

Acknowledging the initiative of the Government of Germany to support the establishment of a regional renewable energy centre of excellence in Egypt, call on the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, concerned national institutions and regional organizations to work closely together with the centre,

In discussing the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the context of sustainable development needs of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa and future cooperation between the European Union and Middle East and North Africa, we recommend that:

1. The Conference underline the need to diversify energy resources and underscore the considerable potential that renewable energy and energy efficiency have on achieving sustainable development;

2. The Conference call upon all of the participating countries to set national targets for renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency measures. In order to meet these targets, appropriate policy instruments and economic incentives should be adopted;

3. The Conference support the use of all forms of renewable energy, in particular large-scale renewable energy systems such as solar, thermal and wind, in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa to satisfy their own energy needs as well as for export to European countries. With this vision in mind, much larger investments are needed to establish the necessary infrastructure for interconnections between Europe and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa;

4. The Conference agree that concerted global action to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency is needed. In this context, regional and global cooperation on the optimization of national support schemes, the exchange of best practices, "know-how" and technical progress through bilateral and regional arrangements and governmental, non-governmental, local government institutions and partnerships, including the Renewable Energy Policy for the Twenty-first Century, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Programme, the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition, the Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund, the Information Gateway for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and the World Renewable Energy Network, are important;

5. The Conference stress the need for developed countries and regional and international financing institutions, such as the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and Arab funds, to scale up their technical and financial assistance to countries in the Middle East and North Africa region for renewable energy programmes, including technology transfer, indigenization and capacity-building, to support local manufacture of components of renewable energy systems;

6. The Conference recognize the need for significant financial resources, both public and private, to be invested in renewable energy. This should include the use of innovative financing mechanisms and market-based instruments, such as the Clean Development Mechanism, as well as use of the Global Environment Facility, which covers the incremental cost of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Conference participants are committed to creating the appropriate conditions for positive investment in energy efficiency and renewable energies to attract private capital for investments;

7. The Conference call upon renewable energy manufacturers, in particular manufacturers of wind turbines, to expand their industrial base in order to meet energy demand and to reduce prices;

8. The Conference call upon countries in the region, regional and international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to put more emphasis on developing and implementing educational and public awareness programmes on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and applications in the Middle East and North Africa region;

9. The Conference, taking into consideration the needs of different social categories, particularly the poor, advise the countries of the Middle East and North Africa to work on energy pricing systems that bring social justice, and induce economic development and climate protection;

10. The Conference express its appreciation and compliments to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for the organization of the fourth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference, and the intensive governmental plans for the development of renewable energy with support of the European Union countries. The participants also thank the Prime Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Syrian Ministry of Electricity, represented by National Energy Research Centre, and the other coorganizers of the conference, including the German Ministry of Environment, Natural Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and the United Nations Environment Programme for the efforts exerted and the support extended in holding such a successful conference and in bringing about such constructive outcomes;

11. The Conference express its gratitude to the Moroccan delegation for its proposal to host the fifth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference in 2008, and to the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for its offer to host the sixth Middle East and North Africa Renewable Energy Conference in 2009.

Damascus, 24 June 2007